experience, before the ſapling has thrown out its leaves, only exhauſts its ſtrength, and prevents its aſſuming a natural form; juſt as the form and ſtrength of ſubſiding metals are injured when the attraction of coheſion is diſturbed.

Tell me, ye who have ſtudied the human mind, is it not a ſtrange way to fix principles by ſhowing young people that they are ſeldom ſtable? And how can they be fortified by habits when they are proved to be fallacious by example? Why is the ardour of youth thus to be damped, and the luxuriancy of fancy cut to the quick? This dry caution may, it is true, guard a character from worldly miſchances; but will infallibly preclude excellence in either virtue or knowledge*. The ſtumbling-block thrown acroſs every path by ſuſpicion, will prevent any vigorous exertions of genius or benevolence, and life will be ſtripped of its moſt alluring charm long before its calm evening, when man ſhould retire to contemplation for comfort and ſupport.

A young man who has been bred up with domeſtic friends, and led to ſtore his mind

* I have already obſerved that an early knowledge of the world, obtained in a natural way, by mixing in the world, has the ſame effect: inſtancing officers and women.

with

with as much ſpeculative knowledge as can be acquired by reading and the natural reflections which youthful ebullitions of animal ſpirits and inſtinctive feelings inſpire, will enter the world with warm and erroneous expectations. But this appears to be the courſe of nature; and in morals, as well as in works of taſte, we ſhould be obſervant of her ſacred indications, and not preſume to lead when we ought obſequiouſly to follow.

In the world few people act from principle; preſent feelings, and early habits, are the grand ſprings: but how would the former be deadened, and the latter rendered iron corroding fetters, if the world were ſhewn to young people juſt as it is; when no knowledge of mankind or their own hearts, ſlowly obtained by experience, rendered them forbearing? Their fellow creatures would not then be viewed as frail beings; like themſelves, condemned to ſtruggle with human infirmities, and ſometimes diſplaying the light, and ſometimes the dark ſide of their character; extorting alternate feelings of love and diſguſt; but guarded againſt as beaſts of prey, till every enlarged ſocial feeling, in a word, —humanity, was eradicated.

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